

LANSDOWNNE PUBLIC LECTURE



PACIFIC &
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HUMANITIES



CENTRE FOR
ASIA-PACIFIC INITIATIVES

IN THE HUMANITIES



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SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES,
LINGUISTICS AND
CULTURES

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If colonialism is what made modernity, the American empire is the infrastructure of the present, the conditions of possibility that frame and organize the world and our knowledge of it. However, with the re-election of Donald Trump as the next American president who pledges to expel undocumented migrants, to erect a “tariff wall,” and to demand “protection money” from its allies, the American empire is now facing the possibility of its dismantling, a situation that while intellectually willing and jubilantly welcomed by some (the Arab World for instance), may sound like a bad news to others (such as Taiwan), given their worry about the other empire — China. The possibility of a dismantled American empire, and the threat of another emerging empire, creates an intellectual aporia, a political conundrum and a state of puzzlement, that constrains our understanding of the present and imagination of the future, particularly from the East Asian standpoint. How should critical humanities help us deal with this futurity by envisioning global transformation beyond the age of empire? Or is there room to reconfigure the meaning of empire for survival in the present?

Reflecting on the work of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies (IACS) collective in the last two decades, the lecture intends to explicate how it envisions global transformations through inter-referential methodology as a form of relational thinking and connective history, and how its translocal, translational alliance may generate solidarity and a new subjectivity against empire.



Beyond Imperial Aporia:

Taiwan and the Inter-Asia Work in Global Transformations

JANUARY
28, 2025

4:30 – 6:00 PM

133 SNGEQU, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

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